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Approved For Release 2005/11/29 : CIA-RDP79R00904A001100010032-3

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INFORMATION FOR THE PLANNING

SUBJECT: Probable Communist Reactions to Certain  
US or US-Supported Courses of Action in  
Vietnam and Laos

PROPOSED COURSES OF ACTION\*

CATEGORY 1. Air raids upon key supply centers along the  
Viet Cong supply and infiltration corridor as far down  
as possible, these raids to be conducted by the VNAF, possibly  
using napalm

25X1

CATEGORY 2. Ground force cross-border raids on the same  
targets by ARVN units up to battalion in size and perhaps  
accompanied by US advisors.

\* These descriptions of proposed courses of action are  
abbreviated summaries of the courses spelled out in  
the JCI Memorandum devoted to this subject.

28 July 64

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CATEGORY 3. Limited air strikes against specific military and transportation targets in North Vietnam by unarmed planes flown exclusively by non-US aircraft.

1. In response to the first or second categories of action, local Communist military forces in the areas of actual attack would react vigorously, but we believe that none of the Communist powers involved would respond with major military moves designed to change the nature of the conflict. Rather than risk escalation, which must appear to them unnecessary and potentially disastrous to long-term achievement of their objectives, they would be more likely to rely on a continuing war of attrition and on intensive propaganda and political maneuvering aimed at isolating the US and building up pressure for an international conference to neutralize South Vietnam. In any event, the intensity of Communist response to Category 1 and 2 actions would depend to some extent upon the scale and manner in which such actions were executed.

2. Air strikes on North Vietnam itself (Category 3) would evoke sharper Communist reactions than air strikes confined to targets in Laos, but even in this case fear of escalation

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would probably restrain the Communists from a major military response. Though we think it unlikely, they might attempt isolated air raids on Da Nang and other South Vietnamese cities hoping quickly to scatter South Vietnamese morale.

3. There are various local military or semi-military actions, short of major change in the character of the conflict, which should be considered among possible Communist responses:

(a) Improvement of local air defenses (probably with additional AA equipment from North Vietnam and China), dispersal of supplies and troop concentrations, and movement discipline designed to temper effective air attack. Such measures would be likely.

(b) Intensification of Viet Cong subversive and attacks, accompanied perhaps by the more or less covert introduction into South Vietnam of some additional personnel from North Vietnam. This response also would be likely.

(c) Sabotage attacks on airfields in South Vietnam to damage their communications facilities, POL depots, etc., and if possible to cripple planes on the ground. We believe such attacks likely.

(d) A widespread campaign of terrorism against Americans, including civilians and dependents, in South Vietnam. We think the chances of such a campaign would be less than even.

(e) Communist forces now in Laos could attempt to seize one or more of the Mekong towns. We believe such an attempt would be unlikely.

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(f) Fighter aircraft would be introduced into North Vietnam. We think this will likely if US/SVF air strikes are confined to targets in Laos (Category 1). However, if attacks are initiated against North Vietnam itself (Category 2), chances of the Communists introducing some defensive air capability in North Vietnam would increase appreciably, mounting as the scope and intensity of the attacks increase.

b. The influence of the USSR on the Communist camp in the Indochina situation is limited, and it wants to avoid too direct involvement. Moscow would certainly want to show itself no less strong than the Chinese in opposition to the US-supported moves. It would almost certainly consider that an intense international campaign against the US could damage US interests considerably, to Soviet world-wide gain, and would not necessarily jeopardize Soviet detente tactics on issues of US-Soviet relations other than Vietnam. Accordingly, the Soviets would give their vigorous political and propaganda support, and would probably place themselves in the forefront of those calling for an international conference -- and might accompany this by leaving a note in the US to censure the US.

John A. McCone  
Director

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Remarks:

I saw McGeorge this afternoon.

In answer to your questions: yes, it was responsive to the requirements and he regarded it as very useful.

He suggested it be prepared for your signature as a memo for the President and that you might wish to circulate it at the luncheon.

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